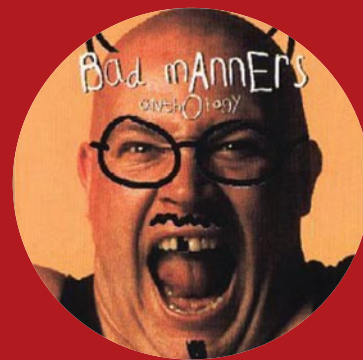


HACKNEY HECKLER



Overground life, P2



Hackney tunes, P2-3



Sam Hallam, P3

Newsletter of the Hackney Solidarity Network

free/donation

Issue 1, Autumn 2009

WOODBERRY DOWN BLUES

How East Enders are making way for a profit grab

Dick Turpin used to rob the wealthy as they rode over Stamford Hill. Now Hackney's right wing Labour council is trying to rob from the poor to give to the rich.

Woodberry Down Estate was once one of Britain's finest social housing schemes.

2,000 flats and houses with all the facilities needed for the residents from cradle to grave.

There was the then ultra modern John Scott health centre and youth club, libraries, pubs and an old people's home, all right next to a zone two tube and Finsbury Park.

It was a place of pride for the East Enders who moved there from blitzed post-war inner London. But after its transfer from Greater London Council, Hackney Council ran the estate down.

The secondary school was shut for no reason (false claims of dodgy wiring) and the

old people's home demolished.

Repairs were left and left. By the 1990s the estate needed major works. An old Labour council would have done one thing but the new one had a different plan — use it to make money for the rich and houses for the middle classes.

The developers had kept their eye on this area for decades. An enormous plot of land right by park and leisure facilities and with some of the best transport links in London. It never had a hope.

So a massive so-called regeneration plan was drawn up which would see, at the cost of £1 billion, the whole estate demolished, good houses and rundown flats, to provide 4,500 apartments.

2,250 were for private sale, 850 for part buy part rent and just 1,460 were social rented units — 25% less than were

originally there. And the posh flats would get pride of place on the estate.

As with all these “regenera-

Woodberry Down was a place of pride for the East Enders, but Hackney Council ran the estate down

tion schemes” this is simply a land grab by the speculators — one that is going belly up as we speak. The scheme has es-

entially been mothballed.

Although hundreds of flats have already been evicted and demolished, not one single new dwelling has been built.

Berkeley Homes, the key private builder in the scheme, are not building private houses for sale because no-one will buy them. Their share prices have more than halved, though they continue to raise money to buy cheap land.

It is ironic that the share price goes up with taxpayers' offers of financial support to these companies, which exist only to fleece the taxpayer. And without Berkeley's funding there is no money for the rest of the plan.

Until recently the public was told the government had no money for social housing.

Then they realised with unemployment about to rocket and their mates in the building

firms in trouble they needed to bail out the same private companies that were making a killing out of buying public land on the cheap.

So the Homes and Community Agency, at the start of March came in with a £16 million rescue package to kickstart the flagship Woodberry Down regeneration project.

It will allow the council's partner, the developer Berkeley Homes, to build 117 social rented homes on the Old School site of the sprawling housing estate.

Mayor Boris Johnson has approved their 'masterplan' but his approval signals no more available money.

Wouldn't it be brilliant if the housing crisis forced the state and LBH to end up using all this site for social housing — no doubt they would claim it was what they wanted all along — but through gritted teeth.

Picture: Horston House, Woodberry Down



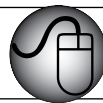
www.hackneysolidaritynetwork.org.uk



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Overground, underground we're not working for free

Earlier this year, staff on London Overground — which runs through Hackney — won an impressive victory and beat the lie that you can't fight and win during a recession. What was it about and how did they do it?

300 station staff, conductors and booking clerks had been angry for years, feeling that their conditions of work were appalling.

Their staff accommodation was inadequate. Their pay was low, as little as £14,000 a year plus benefits. Industrial relations had completely broken down. Private company Silverlink had held the contract for years and done nothing for the staff.

In late 2007, London Overground took over the contract and came under the Transport for London umbrella. This raised expectations that pay would be brought into line with London Underground station staff, who earn a minimum of £24,000 a year.

But improvements did not come automatically: workers had to fight for them.

RMT representatives recruited 94% of the staff into the union. From the start of 2009, they held a series of well-attended mass meetings. At one of these, staff decided they wanted to ballot for strike action.

The issues on the ballot were

pay, inadequate accommodation and driver-only operation.

The ballot result was a mighty ten-to-one 'Yes' on over a 70% turnout: 171 votes to 18. This forced management to negotiate seriously.

Staff ended up with a package of pay rises between 12% and 35%; the average was 22%.

They stopped the extension of driver-only operation and got a fixed timescale for improvements to accommodation.

RMT members voted 78-30 to accept the package.

This would be a remarkable achievement at any time, but in a recession, it is even more outstanding.

Staff showed they were not willing to accept bare minimum pay and facilities. They would not 'make sacrifices' to help their company out during a recession. It was important to them to win more, and they went for it.

Their willingness to fight — seen in the big turnout and 'Yes' vote — was the key to their success.

Lo and behold, when they did fight, the company found some money. Across our industry and the wider economy, bosses say they are strapped for cash.

But examples like this show they can afford it. We just need the confidence to take them on.

OVERGROUND

Hackney TUC's campaign

For the recent European Elections Hackney TUC brought together a community coalition to mobilise a vote against the BNP, with a simple message. "If you don't vote you will make it easier for the BNP to get elected."

We didn't have any marches and no rallies. Instead we used organising principles learnt from trade unionism.

We urged as many people as possible to get involved. We asked everyone to do a little, and those who did a little were asked to do a little more. We asked everyone to be an organiser, and to involve other people in activity.

We worked closely with the Hope not Hate campaign and distributed 50,000 of their newspapers with a special 'Hackney Voices' centrespread, plus 35,000 leaflets.

The activists were from community organisations, tenants groups, trade unions and political organisations from the Communist Party to the Conservatives.

While some people were suspicious of working with people they disagreed with politically, the overall experience was uplifting. We mobilised over 150 volunteers and had a co-ordinator in

almost every ward.

Sadly, the BNP won two seats in the European Parliament. A devastating blow to anti-racists. However, in Hackney we ensured people voted and the BNP share of the vote was a derisory 2.2%.

While the network we brought together was focused on defeating the BNP, we are clear that their success is a direct result of the failure of political parties to organise and represent ordinary people.

We hope to apply the same techniques to issues which affect our communities: jobs, housing, education and youth.

Ten top tunes a

For an area of London known for its "edgy" creativity (it is said there are more se here than anywhere else in the UK?) there are surprisingly few songs about Hack top ten run down of my discoveries over the years, get in touch if you have any favourites I've missed out. John Eden

1



Bad Manners

Night Bus to Dalston (1980)

From the B-side of hit single (and karaoke anthem) "Lip Up Fatty", this is an obvious pissstake of two-tone rivals Madness and their "Night Boat To Cairo".

The band came together in the mid-1970's at Woodberry Down School.

2



The Apostles

The Stoke Newington 8 (1983)

On August the 20th, 1971 The officers of the state gate-crashed and stopped the fun A house on Amhurst Road Number 359

Was raided and paraded out were comrades of mine.

The Apostles could loosely be described as anarchist punks, but they were notable for not toeing the pacifist line made popular by bands like Crass.

3



Overlord X

Rough in Hackney

This is not England... So you can't turnt Where Hackney Premi UK hi Estate but th is th of th Ene

Dynamo City

One Night in Hackney (2004)

After walking for hours through the urban sprawl

I finally heard the boom of the soundsystem And as we turned the corner we saw some strange people — hangin' around One night in Hackney

The tragic tale of a young man seduced into drug abuse in rave's dark underbelly, narrated by a grinning loon over a pulsing electronic din. I guess you will probably know from that description if this is for you or not.

8



Razorlight

Dalston (2003)

It's a big big world And you can do what you like You can do anything you want Because darling, it's your life But don't go back to Dalston

Another sad story, this time about a relationship break up, as told by middle-of-the-road bedwetting "rockers". Dalston's magical ability to repel members of Razorlight is one more reason to be glad you live here.

9

Th' Ends

H.A.C.K.N.E.Y./ Aftermath (2007)

Grime usually comes from further east (i.e. Bow)

but Ends' ends are right here. "H.A.C.K.N.E.Y." shows us a side of life here that the estate agents never mention:

To you it's Crackney...

"Aftermath" meanwhile is lyrically and musically more downbeat:

"People say change is good but round my way changes are bad... These days the kids don't skate, they stand around all filled with hate and wait, it's nuts The Ends are blocked, they've closed the community huts" Th' Ends' "Knowledge Not Gangster" mixtape is floating about as a free download, so check it out.

10

Girls Aloud

Hoxton Hero

Whilst there a lion reasons t



Rethinking how we can stop the BNP

The British National Party recently got nearly a million votes and two seats in the European parliament and we need to ask why, a party based on race hatred and anti-working class politics, did so.

YouGov, the pollsters, polled 3200 people and found that BNP voters (in their sample) gave some interesting replies.

- 74% don't feel they have enough money to live on properly, (compared to a nationwide average of 52%)
- 49% don't feel safe going out in their area, (29% national average).
- 75% don't feel their family will have the chance to prosper in the years ahead, (52% national average)
- 49% fear a family member will lose their job in the next year, (40% national average)
- 59% think Labour "used to care about the concerns of people like me but doesn't nowadays".

■ And overall, 63% of the poll think Labour used to care about their concerns, and only 19% think it does today.

YouGov found "... that most BNP voters do NOT subscribe to ... normal racist views". Just 44 % agreed with the BNP in rejecting the view that non-white citizens are just as British as white citizens.

The poll shows the simplistic BNP voter = a racist voter is neither accurate nor helpful. The above concerns are social and economic issues.

The feeling that Labour has abandoned the working-class, is made clear and not just among BNP voters.

With the economic crisis, the prospects of massive cuts in public, attacks on living standards, MP's fiddling, it is no surprise that a million voted for a party that,

while odious and incapable of providing answers, appears untainted.

Trade Unions are fundamentally opposed to the politics of racial division and fascism. But how do we convince other people of this?

We need to do more than just be anti-racist/fascist, we must answer the questions and concerns of ordinary working class people

We need to get involved with communities demanding no cuts in services, with those fighting to save jobs, and understand the real concerns people have about immigration.

The political abandonment of the working-class has left a dangerous vacuum the trades unions need to ensure is filled by politics that defend working-class communities and not by the politics of racism and division.

■ Thoughts from a public sector worker

A lesson in how S

With a background of dozens of pub closures nationally every week, locals at the historic Swan in Upper Clapton were devastated to hear it was to close.

But unlike most regulars these ones were not going to let their pub go without a fight.

So they called a public meeting, to which 100 came, set up a campaign to 'Save the Swan', sent out letters, set up facebooks and a website, put on barbecues and gigs and soon the campaign was in all the London, Hackney and national Jewish newspapers.

They found out the owners were not selling because they were making



a loss but that they were a private equity company hundreds of millions of pounds in debt to the bank.


And They found out the buyers were a small

About Hackney

self-styled "artists" Hackney. Here is a

Hackney (1988)
New York, this is
an slap that on
ble and get happy
am I from boys?
ney!
er league hardcore
p hop. Kingsmead
gets a shout out,
he real talking point
he pounding funk
he beats and Public
my sample.

4



Tofu Love Frogs
Star of Hackney Downs (1996)

The Tofus were darlings of the 90s squat gig and free festival scene. This is a crustie love song with a heavy dose of Stella-fuelled folky-punk pogo action:
*She found a flat to let
That had no tenant yet
With a crowbar she went down
In she went and said 'fuck the rent'
And she's squatting in Hackney Downs*

7



Wordsound I-Powa
Wordsound Meets Conscious Sounds at Stamford Hill (1996)

A Collaboration between Skiz Fernando (of New York record label Wordsound) and Stamford Hill dub legend Dougie Wardrop.
Proper bass and echo to nod your head to and get lost in.

5



Kektex
Hackney Council Are a Bunch of C*nts (1998)

This boshing instrumental acid techno number speaks for itself, really.

6



Girls Aloud, it is indisputable that their puppet masters Xenomania (the production team behind them) know how to knock out pure pop gold. This b-side disrespects the legions of identikit trilby-wearing indie bands from the south of the Borough: *Just coz your dad knew the Rolling Stones, You've got the Primrose set in your cell phone, Don't kid yourself, You're an indie clone, We've seen it before get a sound of your own.*

8



Swans may fly

tutions can not do and the campaign received support across the religious and ethnic divides that split Hackney.
The campaign failed to stop the pub being sold and closed in January, nor did they get the new owners to rent the building to them as a pub.
But a year on from the proposed closure the new owners have still not got planning permission for a conversion, after a wide spread objection campaign, and so sadly the pub stands derelict.
The planning application now goes to a planning committee and we can be sure the Save the Swan campaign will be there again.

9



Justice for Sam Hallam

Since 2004, 21-year-old Sam Hallam from Hoxton has been serving life imprisonment for a murder he did not commit.

The only evidence presented against him at his 2005 trial consisted of contradictory statements placing him at the murder scene. This evidence was riddled with inconsistencies and anomalies.

Sam Hallam was born on 9 July 1987. He attended Central Foundation School in Islington. At the time of his arrest he was working as a kitchen fitter but planned to apply to join the British Army when he was a little older.

He has two older brothers and one younger sister. Prior to his arrest, he was of good character and had never been charged with or convicted of any offence. He is currently imprisoned at HMP Bullingdon in Oxfordshire.

In 2006, Sam Hallam's relatives met with individuals who had played leading roles in the campaigns to free the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four, Judith Ward, and the Bridgewater Four as well as campaigns on behalf of less well-known innocent prisoners.

Following the dismissal of his appeal in March 2007, his family, friends and supporters launched a public campaign for Sam Hallam's release and exoneration.

Since Sam's trial and appeal, significant new material supporting his innocence has emerged. None of this evidence has ever been considered by any court.

On 20 February 2008, a dossier of fresh evidence in the case was presented to the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

The dossier includes statements from witnesses who were present at the murder scene who confirm Sam Hallam was not there, material which casts serious doubt on the truthfulness of the chief prosecution witness.

The campaign's objectives are to seek new evidence in the case, to publicise the facts of the case as widely as possible and to provide practical and moral support to Sam and his family during his wrongful imprisonment.

The campaign has no aims or agenda beyond securing the release and exoneration of this innocent young man and is not associated with any political organisation.

Get involved by emailing the Sam Hallam campaign. Ask your trade or student union, community or youth group, tenants association, church organisation, political party or other body to which you belong to adopt Sam's case and to invite speakers from the campaign.

Write to Sam letting him know you support his campaign for justice:

Sam Hallam
MW5897
HMP Bullingdon
PO Box 50
Bicester
Oxon OX25 1PZ

■ This information is from the campaign website at samhallam.com

10

Attacked for speaking out in Unison

Four members of the Town Hall union Unison including local Chair Brian Debus (pictured), have been banned from holding union positions for up to five years having been found guilty of breaching union rules.

This follows the production of a leaflet in 2007 criticising the union's standing orders committee for refusing to table motions critical of union policy and its fundraising for New Labour.

The leaflet featured that well-known Buddhist phrase "Hear no Evil, See no Evil, Speak no Evil", and a cartoon of the three wise monkeys.

General Secretary Dave Prentis and his New Labourite allies, eager to rid themselves of four thorns in their side, said that the leaflet was racially offensive and launched a two year investigation. Despite concluding that there was no racist intent in producing the leaflet, the four have still been found guilty of producing material that "gave racist offence to members".

To find the four, who are high-profile anti-racist campaigners, were racist is not only laughable but extremely cynical. And this from a union that refuses to act against leading BNP activists in its membership.

Naturally it has caused outrage both within Unison and the wider trade union movement.

The priority of every union should be to defend its members from jobs, pay and conditions. Unison's priority appears to be to silence anyone critical of their

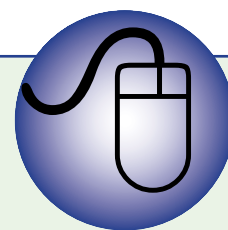
chucking money at a Labour Party that is attacking public sector staff to pay for their bank bail-outs.

An employment tribunal is currently considering whether Unison is guilty of witch-hunting the four for being members of the Socialist Party.

That the three wise monkey's cartoon was also used by the union's disabled members committee without cries of "racism!" from the apparatchiks lends evidence to support the bleedin' obvious.

If you are a member of Unison you could do worse than check out stopthewitchhunt.org.uk, and then ask Dave Prentis to do his job of protecting your job rather than funding New Labour to take it away from you.





freelondonlistings.co.uk
Decent listings service

londoncitizens.org.uk

Members include faith groups, schools, student organisations, union branches and residents groups.

lcap.org.uk

This activist organisation takes effective, direct, grassroots action against poverty and social injustice in London.

hacknecitizen.co.uk

The Hackney Citizen is an independent quarterly,

hackneypodcast.co.uk

Your monthly serving of Hackney-driven fare

whitechapelanarchistgroup.wordpress.com
The notorious rabble rousers

pogocafe.co.uk

London's best vegan cafe and alternative political hotpot

HACKNEY ON FACEBOOK

[Save The Great British Pub](#)
Hic!

[I'm From Hackney... Booooo! That scared You!](#)

A page to bring all of Hackney's people together, born and bred or who moved to Hackney to live.

[You Know When You Live/Or Have Been Brought Up In Hackney When...](#)

Thoughts on how people inside and outside the borough see Hackney residents.

[Springfield Massive Or alternatively "I Survived Growing Up In A Hood Called Upper Clapton"](#)

Memories from the '80s and '90s.

[Stamford Hillies the Original ghetto!](#)

This group invites anyone who has had a past with the hill.

[Save Ridley Road Market](#)

Traders versus a council determined to sell off their patch.

[I love Hackney](#)

You soppy old gits.

[RIP Etem Celebi](#)

17-year-old Etem Celebi was gunned down by two cowards. Joining this group will show your support for Etem's family.

[Hoxton Reunion](#)

Yeah you guessed it, to reunite people from Hoxton.

samhallam.com

Support in Hoxton for Sam Hallam's campaign is quite phenomenal. His wrongful conviction is discussed here. **See Page 3**

HACKNEY ON BLOGS

finsburypark.wordpress.com

Blog to share campaign information

paulstott.typepress.com

Musings on sport, racism and politics

nohackneyhighrise.org.uk

Opposing the construction of towers round London Fields

uncarved.org/blog

John Eden on politics and culture

Save Ridley Road Market!

The traders are convinced that the council will do all it can to run down Ridley Road market and do their upmost to sabotage it. Our informed opinion is that they would like to sell the site of our market, of nearly 200 stalls, to property developers with one eye on the 2012 Olympics. One of the traders made a very apt comment; "This market has survived two world wars, will it survive Hackney council?"

Unemployed Workers' Group

Being unemployed isn't our fault and we're tired of being treated like we've done something wrong when we're using the Jobcentre. We meet every Thursday from 12pm in Cafe Bohemia, 2 Bohemia Place, off Mare St, Hackney. Call 07932 241-737

At last some decent regeneration.

The local artistic types, complete with fashionable haircuts and mental taste in clothes, have picked the half-dead old industrial estate round Hackney Wick Station for their next colonisation project. Out of the way and undesirable, just for once it's not displacing people. Nice one!



Hackney Wick Station, by the entrance. There's some good graffiti round here

Reel News and Hackney Solidarity Network presents...

Monthly documentary films showings on the second Sunday of each month at the Moth Club in Valetter Street, 7pm. Films cover a wide range of topics.

September features reflections by miners 25 years on from the miners strike, a look at the RMT rail strikes of 2009 and the Buenos Aires Tube workers' struggle.

Hackney Residents Group

Hackney temporary accommodation & hostel residents are campaigning to get housed quicker and in better conditions! Every two weeks people meet, discuss issues and plan action.

Call 020 7247-6101 for more details.

Hackney Hero

Johnny Walker from Hackney and Leyton Sunday Football League.



Mr Walker, we salute you for defending Hackney Marshes and the football pitches to the hilt against all comers. Legend.

Games Monitor is a network of people raising awareness about issues within the London Olympic development processes. We want to highlight the local, London and international implications of the Olympic industry. We seek to deconstruct the 'fantastic' hype of Olympic boosterism and the eager complicity of the 'urban elites' in politics, business, the media, sport, academia and local institutional 'community stakeholders'. Take a look at gamesmonitor.org.uk for more.

About the Heckler and Hackney Solidarity Network...

Hackney Solidarity Network (HSN) was set up in early 2008 to:

- Provide a space where both individuals and group from across Hackney can come to network, report back on and share information on what they are doing, and to share their skills and knowledge with others
- Improve communication between campaigns, groups and individuals in Hackney and beyond
- Give people the opportunity to meet and socialise with each other

■ Facilitate joint working and campaigning

We believe that the solidarity network will over time come to play a key role in resisting the continued attacks on our communities by the council and others; and indeed come to play a positive role in helping to build a strong, peaceful and united Hackney.

We hold monthly open meetings at the MOTH Club on Valette Street (off Morning Lane), where we have reports from different campaigns - leaving the most

time for informal chatting and networking.

We organise occasional meetings about topical issues e.g. to support the international campaign of El Movimiento for Justice in El Barrio (MJB); a mainly Mexican migrant New York community organisation, about their struggle against displacement by gentrification in Harlem by a London based property developer.

Recently we joined up with Reel News activist video collective, to show inspiring and

thought-provoking short films about a wide variety of issues, from workers struggles in the UK and other parts of the world to ones about the environment and climate change.

3,000 copies of this newsletter are printed and distributed across the borough. If you want to let Hackney residents know about your campaign, group or community activity - then please get in touch with the details.

Or if you want to write an article, have your say, take photographs or draw some cartoons

for us - again get in touch.

Or if you would be willing to take some copies to give out to friends, family or neighbours - then we'd also love to hear from you.

STAY IN TOUCH

If you would like to receive invites to our meetings, film nights (held every month) and other activities - send us your email address and we will add you to the mailing list. Contact us using the details below.



www.hackneysolidaritynetwork.org.uk



hackneysolidarity@hotmail.com



07757 289-726